

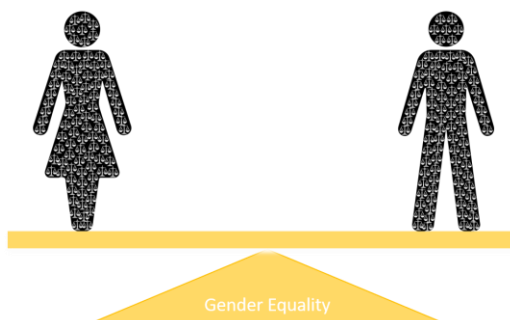


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The Gender Equality Strategy and the Gender Equality Plan 2022-2025

„Ilie Murgulescu” Institute of Physical Chemistry of the Romanian Academy



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Contents

Introduction	4
I. Review of requirements, policies and case studies	4
II. Diagnosis	5
II.1. Data collection	5
II. 2. Data analysis	5
III. GE strategy and GEP	13
III.1. GE Strategy 2022-2025	14
III.2. GE Plan 2022-2025	14
IV. Monitoring and evaluation of the GEP	15
Annex 3. List of sources used for the literature review	17

Abbreviations and definitions

IPC	“Ilie Murgulescu” Institute of Physical Chemistry of the Romanian Academy
GE	Gender equality
GEP	Gender equality plan
HoD	Head of Department
HR	Human Resources
D	Director
DD	Deputy Director
SS	Scientific Secretary
ED	Economic Director
SC	Scientific Council

Sex	Either of the two major forms of individuals that occur in many species and that are distinguished respectively as female or male especially on the basis of their reproductive organs and structures (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/)
Gender	The behavioural, cultural, or psychological traits typically associated with one sex (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/)
Sex vs Gender	A clear delineation between sex and gender is typically prescribed, with sex

as the preferred term for biological forms, and gender limited to its meanings involving behavioural, cultural, and psychological traits. In this dichotomy, the terms male and female relate only to biological forms (sex), while the terms masculine/masculinity, feminine/femininity, woman/girl, and man/boy relate only to psychological and sociocultural traits (gender)

(<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/>)

Introduction

“Ilie Murgulescu” Institute of Physical Chemistry (IPC) developed the Gender Equality (GE) strategy for 2022-2025 to ensure the equality of opportunity for all the IPC personnel, irrespective on their gender. The GE strategy was built on the provisions of the European Charter for researchers and of the Code of Conduct in the process of the recruitment of researchers¹, 2015-2019, the European Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025² and the Horizon Europe guidance on gender equality plans³.

The aim for developing the GE strategy is to ensure that IPC is a safe place for everyone, and all activities and processes that take place respect the principles of equality, diversity, inclusiveness and non-discrimination.

Taking into account the GE strategy, IPC developed the GE Plan (GEP) for 2022-2025, with concrete actions and measures, as well as indicators to measure progress of its implementation.

Enforcing its mission and values, the GE strategy and the GEP of the IPC ensure and promote equality and diversity to knowledge and the acquisition of skills to all. The objectives of the GE strategy are implemented through specific actions that aim at safeguarding an equal and inclusive organizational culture and promoting gender-equality at all levels. As such, the GE strategy and the GEP will pro-actively enable, gender equality awareness raising, skills and competences; gender balance in decision-making structures and processes, including recruitment; gender equality in research; and integrating the gender dimension in the entire research process.

I. Review of requirements, policies and case studies

Prior to developing the GE strategy and the GEP, the management of the IPC appointed a working group to conduct a literature review the of the existing requirements, policies, recommendations, examples and case studies pertinent to discrimination, inclusiveness and gender equality.

The resources used in this literature review study are presented in Annex 3.

¹ https://cdn2.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/policy_library/ttf_goal_2_results_v1.0.pdf

² https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en

³ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ffcb06c3-200a-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1>

II. Diagnosis (data collection and analysis)

II.1. Data collection

A. The indicators listed below were selected as relevant for the discussion on gender equality issues (according to *human resources office* data):

- Numbers of women and men in research and administrative decision-making positions (e.g., top management team, scientific committee, heads of IPC Laboratories, heads of IPC administrative services);
- Staff numbers by sex/gender at all levels, by domains, function (including administrative / support staff)
- Numbers of staff by sex/gender applying for/taking parental leave, for how long and how many returned after taking the leave.

B. As part of data collection and diagnosis, during 24.03.2022 - 30.03.2022, it was conducted at *IPC a wide survey* with the following indicators:

- Number of years needed for women and men to make career advancements
- Numbers of staff by sex/gender applying for/taking parental leave, for how long and how many returned after taking the leave
- Opinions on the work-life balance in the research institute
- Integration of the gender dimension into research content
- Perception of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment in institute
- Perception (opinion) regarding inclusiveness and discrimination at the IPC

II. 2. Data analysis

It was conducted an internal analysis of the data collected, and reviews of existing policies addressing gender equality and inclusiveness. The analyses took place in meetings at all levels, with the gender equality function assigned for developing the IPC GEP involving management, research staff and representatives of research institute administrative and support services.

The conclusions of the internal audit were then analysed and approved in the IPC Management (D, SD, SS, ED), and then communicated to the entire research institute staff.

With mandate from the Board of Directors, the Director committed to the development and implementation of the GEP in the IPC, for 2022-2025.

II.2.1 Quantitative analysis of data

The indicators specified at the point II.1.A, related to data supplied by human resources office, were collected and the total number of women and men is listed in table 1.

Table 1. Numbers of women and men in leadership positions, research staff, auxiliary research and administrative services

IPC positions	Details	Women	Men
• leadership positions	IPC management	2	2
	IPC scientific council	12	4
	Heads of IPC Laboratories	8	0
	Heads of IPC administrative services (other than research)	5	2
• research staff	Research staff total	89	29
	Experienced researchers (CS I, CS II, CS III)	67	21
	Early-stage researchers (CS and ACS)	22	8
• other research positions	Auxiliary research staff (technicians, laborants)	17	5
• administrative personnel	Administrative and support services	14	10

The analysis of numerical data illustrated that:

- **leadership positions**
 - there are 50:50 men and women involved in IPC top-management positions;
 - there are three times more women than man as members in the Scientific Council;
 - there are only women in leadership positions (head of laboratories) at research level;
 - the heads of administrative departments are slightly more women than men.

- **research staff**
 - there are 75% women and 25% men employee in research positions;
 - among all research staff, there are 57% woman employees as experienced researchers and 18% woman employees as early-stage researchers, whereas 18% man employees in research positions as experienced researchers and 7% man employees in research positions as early stage;
- **auxiliary research staff (technicians, laborants)**
 - there are three times more women than man in auxiliary research personnel;
- **administrative and support services**
 - there are slightly more women than man in administrative & support personnel.

The number of staff by applying for/taking parental leave in IPC is 27 persons, all of them being women. The maternity leave lasted in average 1.5-2.0 years with the specification that all of them returned at work after taking the leave. Most of the IPC staff applied a single time for parental leave, but there were employees reporting 2 or 3 applications.

The indicators specified at the point II.1.B related to the gender-survey were collected and the data are presented below.

- **Number of years needed for women and men to make career advancements**

In order to evaluate this aspect correctly the survey results were divided into 3 categories, depending on the field of activity of IPC employees, namely research staff, technical staff as well as administration staff working. The analysis of the data showed that:

- **for research staff**

It is required, in average 1.4 ± 0.5 , 6.1 ± 4.9 , 5.4 ± 4.5 , 6.9 ± 3.7 , 4.0 ± 0.6 years in order to make career advancements to ACS, CS, CS III, CS II and CS I positions, respectively. There were 89% women and 11% men employees succeeding in advancements in research positions;
- **for auxiliary research staff (technicians, laborants)**

According to the survey it is required, in average 4.0 ± 1.9 , 6.0 ± 0.0 , 6.3 ± 0.0 , years in order to make career advancements to assistant I, laboratory worker I, and

laboratory worker II, respectively. There were 81% women and 19 % men employees promoted in auxiliary research positions;

➤ **for administrative staff**

It is required, in average 5.4 ± 5.3 , 2.9 ± 0.7 , 3.0 ± 0.0 , 3.0 ± 0.0 , years in order to make career advancements to office heads, specialist inspector IA, inspector I, specialist referees IA, specialist referees I, respectively. There were 89% women and 11% men employee promoted to superior administrative positions.

• **Numbers of staff by sex/gender applying for/taking parental leave**

The survey also questioned the IPC employees applying for maternity / paternity leave. The data are shown in Figure 1. The results of the study showed that 29% of respondents requested maternity leave while 71% did not apply for this type of service. It is noteworthy that only women applied for maternity leave, and there were no cases in which the men-employees asked for paternity leave.

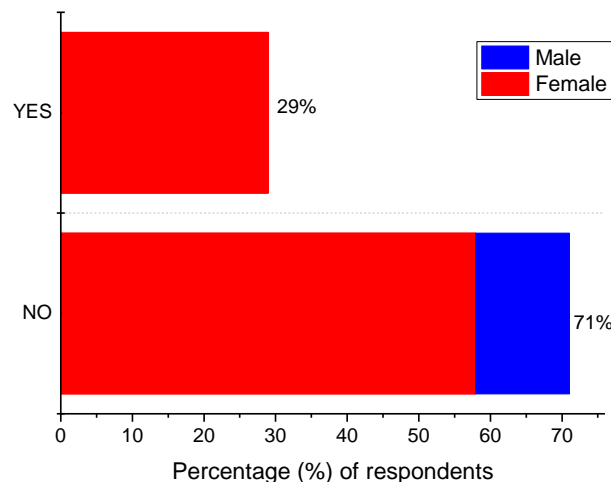


Figure 1. Maternity / partnership leave in IPC - survey questioning

• **Opinions on the work-life balance in the IPC**

The results of the survey questioning work-life balance are presented in Figure 2.

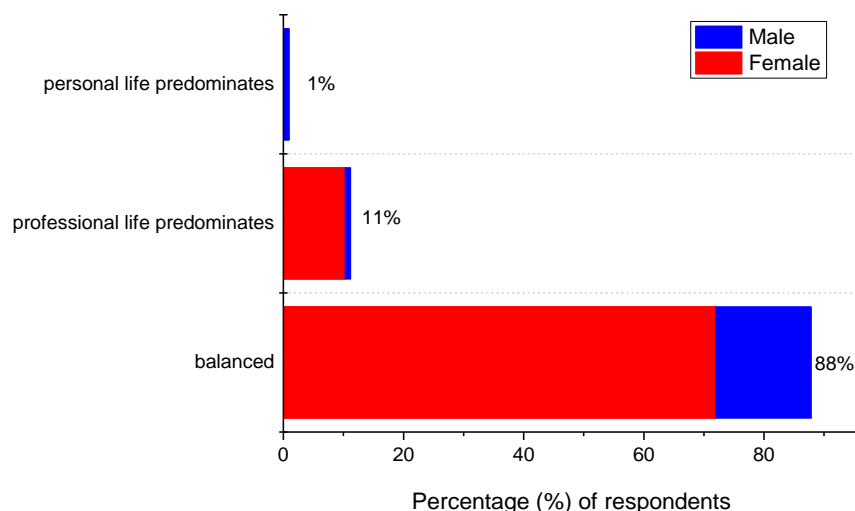


Figure 2. Work-life balance survey questioning

The majority of respondents (88%) reported a balanced ratio, 11% claimed that professional life prevailed while 1% pointed out their personal life was predominant.

- **Integration of the gender dimension into research content**

The results of the survey questioning the integration of the gender dimension into research content are presented in Figure 3.

The results shown that 42% of the respondents said that women predominated within research, 5% claimed that men predominated, 45% said that the ratio between women and men is balanced and 8% have a different opinion. The different opinion was related to the following aspects *i)* there is no gender issue in the research, however this aspect depends on the chosen field; *ii)* they do not know, *iii)* they do not have information; *iv)* the respondents did not detail the answer and *v)* it was mentioned that abroad, the research field is dominated by men while in Romania the number of women working in the research, especially in the field of chemistry is predominant or *vi)* it was argued that the gender dimension among IPC employees involved in the research activity was correlated with the gender of the graduates in the profile faculties.

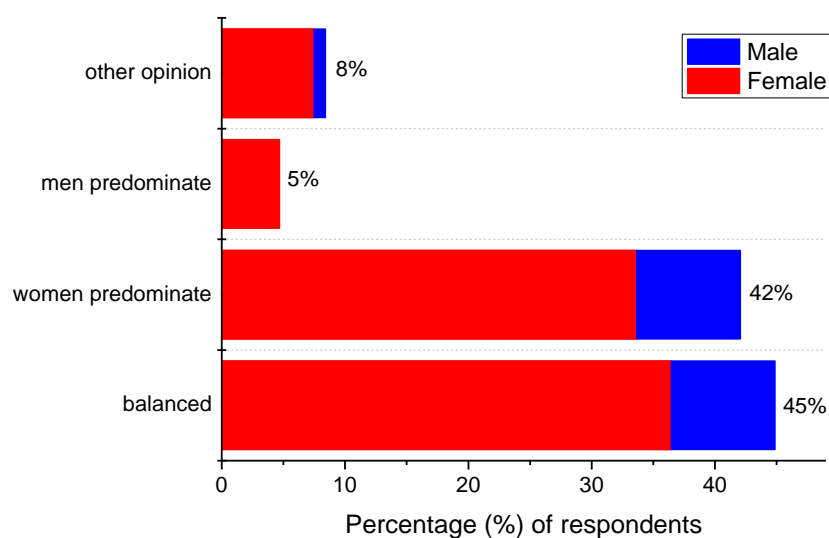


Figure 3. Integration of the gender dimension into research content - survey questioning

- **Perception of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment in IPC**

The issue of sexual harassment at work was also interviewed and the results are presented in Figure 4. The majority of respondents stated that it doesn't exist (66%), while 31% noted that they have no opinion related to this issue or that they are not aware of this phenomenon (2%). There were no respondents reporting sexual harassment at work.

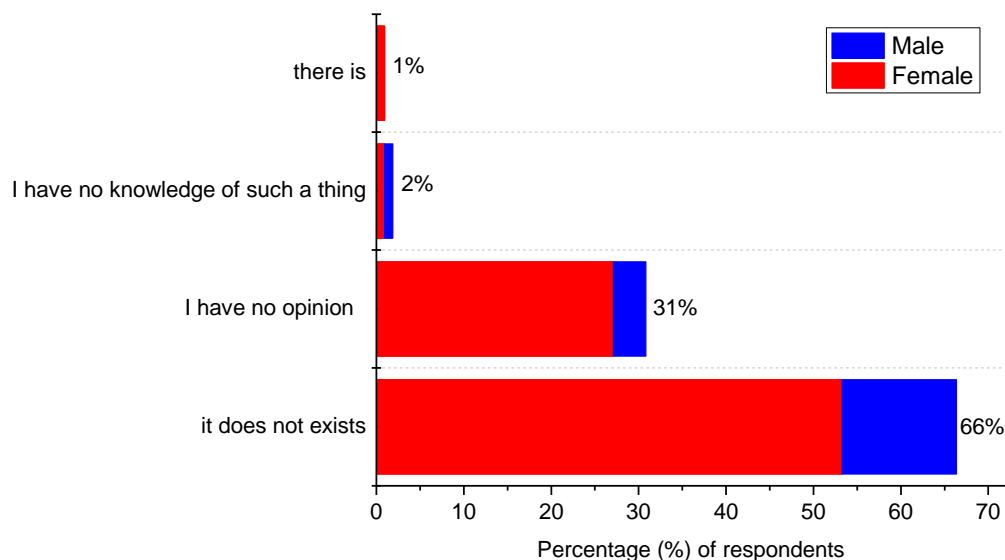


Figure 4. Issues of gender-based violence - survey questioning

Instead, there were opinions (1% of all respondents) that signaled the existence of gender-based violence manifested by the issues mentioned below:

- 1) inappropriate comments about clothing, the nature of the dreams and the aspects of life related to family perspective;
- 2) underestimation due to
 - i) *gender* (the female researcher being “considered” less professionally trained, and there were also reported considerations related to physical appearance);
 - ii) *age* (scientifically lower rating as you get older);
 - iii) *family* - (• the number of members of the same family who works in the same institution, an aspect quantified as a major advantage for those mentioned; • avoiding of management positions for women researchers with children);
 - iv) *graduated school* (e.g., Polytechnic or University).

● **Perception regarding inclusiveness and discrimination at the research institute**

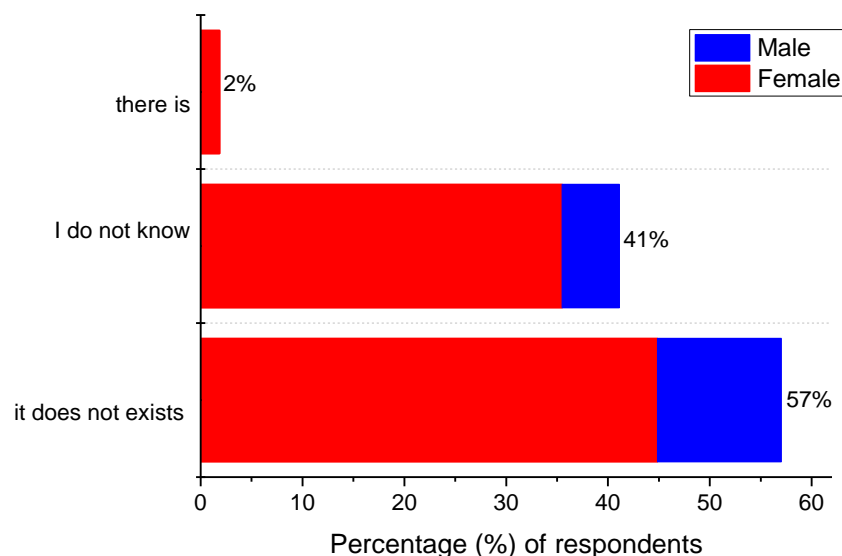


Figure 5. Issues of gender-based inclusion and discrimination - survey questioning

Gender-based discrimination was also prospected in the survey. The results are represented schematically in Figure 5. Most of the IPC staff, 57% said they it doesn't exist and 41% stated

they are not aware of such issues. Instead, there were opinions (2%) that sustained the following aspects:

1) discrimination based on gender in women's access to leadership positions. The idea that leadership positions are almost exclusively for men, despite the majority of female researchers, was emphasized.

2) gender discrimination in career advancements.

It has been reported that men are more likely to make career advancements than women.

3) discrimination regarding access to promotion/job advancements. There was one case mentioning the discrimination in the job promotion in 2008, noting that although all the competition criteria were met by the candidate, the former Director at that time did not approve the competition for the position, which was lost by the institute.

II.2.2. Qualitative analysis of data

The qualitative research in IPC showed that:

- There are 73% women and 27% men employed in IPC (research and administrative positions); for research positions there are 75% women and 25% men employed.
- The research institute is perceived as a safe place, generally without gender-violence; There were no respondents to survey reporting sexual harassment at work. There was one respondent indicating inappropriate discussions about private matters and underestimation due to gender, age, family, and graduated school issues.
- The research institute is overall perceived as inclusive; Respondents to surveys (2%) indicated that the stereotypes and unspoken biases regarding gender still exist in the institute, such as beliefs that leadership positions are almost exclusively for men, or that men are more likely to make career advancements than women, or restricted access to job advancement. The latter case does not represent an institutional issue, the presented problem was referring to the year 2008. In the meantime, new promotion criteria approved by the scientific council have been established (last one approved in 2018 and revised in 2022).

- IPC's policies ensure equal pay for equal work according to law on salary system for all employees and in the process of recruiting staff or career advancement, the basic criterion is the scientific performance regardless of their gender.
- There is not a culture of discrimination at IPC, in which one gender or the other is systematically favoured. Also, taking into account the survey results as well as a future GE strategy and GEP for IPC related to gender issues, the allocation of supplementary staff and financial resources are not justified.
- There is a lack of procedures and knowledge about the gender equality, inclusiveness and non-discrimination.
- The survey did not demonstrate gender discrimination.

To summarize the results of the studies, it can be noted that all the situations mentioned by the respondents and situations analysed at the IPC are without significant factors of discrimination or manifestations based on gender.

The important conclusions of the internal analysis at the IPC are:

- We need to communicate gender relevant actions and measures actively and efficiently;
- We need to develop a gender strategy and a GEP for 2022-2025, with clear actions and targets, and responsible persons;
- In Romania, taking into account that women predominate in chemistry research institutes (e.g. among research staff 75% are women and 25% are men in IPC), gender discrimination seems to be insignificant.

III. GE strategy and GEP

Based on the internal review and the national and European policies and requirements, the IPC Management (D, SD, SS, ED), and Scientific Council will develop the institute strategy for gender equality for 2022-2025, and the corresponding GEP.

The IPC Director will decide on designating a GE officer at the institute. The GE officer has a proactive and consultant role in implementing and monitoring the GE strategy. The GE officer will work closely with the IPC Management (D, SD, SS, ED), HoDs and HR.

Specifically, the GE officer contribute to setting up, implement, monitor and evaluate the GEP; provide practical support and tools to the actors involved in the GEP implementation; cooperate with and engage stakeholders (free charges for IPC) at all levels in order to ensure the implementation of the GEP's actions; raise awareness about the benefits of gender equality in the research institute; assess the progress towards gender equality in the institute.

The institute management mandated the GE function (officer) at the institute to develop the GE strategy and the GEP 2022-2025.

III.1. GE Strategy 2022-2025

The GE Strategy comprises the following objectives for 2022-2025:

- ❖ Promoting mutual respect and ensuring equal opportunities for all ICF employees;
- ❖ Taking measure to prevent inequalities, promoting the values and ensuring equal opportunities for all ICF employees.

III.2. GE Plan 2022-2025

The GE Plan at the IPC comprises key measures, target audience, timeline, responsible persons, and indicators to measure progress.

Action/Measure

1. Appointing a GE officer, with a proactive and/or consultant role to be responsible for monitoring and ensuring that workplace procedures and practices respect gender equality.
2. “Continuous” monitoring of the perception on gender equality through the elaboration of anonymous questionnaires. Annual repetition of the analysis. In the event of imbalances, remedial measures will be implemented. The target is to keep the current situation.
3. Ensuring equal opportunities for all employees in the process of recruitment staff or career advancement, salary in accordance with the criteria and regulations of advancement and competition according to the professional criteria of competence, regardless of their sex. Generally, in Romania and particularly in IPC, the chemistry domain is more attractive for women.
4. Maintaining a balanced ratio between professional and personal life of IPC staff.

5. Develop internal (institute) electronic tool (website/platform) supporting information about GE policies.
6. Informing employees through free Internet meetings about GE policies.

Target

All ICF employees (researchers, technical and administrative staff)

Timeline

2022-2025

Indicators

Gender equality policy.

Dedicated research institute website/platform with information related to GE policies.

Responsible

D, HR, GE officer

IV. Monitoring and evaluation of the GEP

The implementation of the GEP at the IPC, the progress against the GE strategy aims and objectives are regularly assessed, through periodic meeting and reports. The implementation of the GEP will be permanently monitored by the GE officer at the institute. The GE officer is responsible with collecting data and input. GE officer will perform a first analysis of the progress of the GEP (against the indicators), gather knowledge and feedback.

The GE function at the institute will conclude findings reports (once a year), which are then presented to the research institute management and HR for discussions. These meetings will provide valuable conclusions on the implementation of the GEP. These meetings will also provide comments and recommendations that will enable adjustments and improvements to interventions on the GEP for the following year.

The periodic reports allow the continuous review of the impact of the GEP as well as keeping the wider community informed and engaged in the progress towards gender equality. The review of progress reports includes qualitative information as well as quantitative data, such as updates on

human resource data disaggregated by sex, monitoring data to keep track of the implementation of key actions.

After their conclusion and adoption by the research institute management and HR, the periodic (annual) GE progress report is published on the research institute website and communicated to the entire scientific community.

Annex 3. List of sources used for the literature review

(in alphabetic order)

Council of Europe Gender Equality Commission,

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/gender-equality-commission>

EU FESTA - Gender Issues in Recruitment, Appointment and Promotion Processes –

Recommendations for a Gender Sensitive Application of Excellence Criteria,

https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/festa_gender_issues_recruitment_appointment_promotion.pdf

EU Strategy for Gender Equality 2020-2025, [https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-](https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en)

[fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en)

EUA - Universities' Strategies and Approaches towards Diversity, Equity and Inclusion,

<https://eua.eu/downloads/publications/universities-39-strategies-and-approaches-towards-diversity-equity-and-inclusion.pdf>

EUCEN - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in European Higher Education Institutions,

https://eua.eu/downloads/publications/web_diversity%20equity%20and%20inclusion%20in%20european%20higher%20education%20institutions.pdf

European charter & code of conduct for the recruitment of researchers,

https://cdn2.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/policy_library/ttf_goal_2_results_v1.0.pdf

European Institute for Gender Equality, <https://eige.europa.eu>

GARCIA – Mapping organizational work-life policies and practices,

https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/garcia_report_mapping_org_work-life_policies_practices.pdf

Guidelines for using gender-sensitive language in communication, research and administration,

https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/reutlingen_university_guidelines_for_using_gender-sensitive_language.pdf

Horizon Europe General Annexes, [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2021-2022/wp-13-general-annexes_horizon-2021-2022_en.pdf)

[tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2021-2022/wp-13-general-annexes_horizon-2021-2022_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2021-2022/wp-13-general-annexes_horizon-2021-2022_en.pdf)

Horizon Europe guidance on gender equality plans, [https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-](https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ffc06c3-200a-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1)

[/publication/ffc06c3-200a-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1](https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ffc06c3-200a-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1)

LERU - Equality, diversity and inclusion at universities: the power of a systemic approach,

<https://www.leru.org/publications/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-at-universities>

Science Europe - Practical Guide TO Improving Gender Equality in Research Organisations,

https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/se_gender_practical-guide.pdf

Student evaluations of teaching (mostly) do not measure teaching effectiveness,

https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/science_open_research_student_eval_teaching_effectiveness.pdf